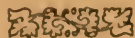


HENRY CLAY.

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ADDRESS OF

Hon. John F. Lacey

BEFORE THE

GRANT CLUB

OF DES MOINES, IOWA



May 19, 1903

HENRY CLAY.

Gentlemen: Henry Clay was born on the 12th day of April, 1777, and died on the 29th day of June, 1852. He entered public life in 1803, a hundred years ago, and for 49 years his name was associated with almost every important public occurrence in our country. He might without vanity have spoken of those events, "All of which I saw, and a part of which I was."

The memory of the present generation needs to be refreshed by the study of the lives of our early statesmen.

General Butler used to tell a story about the celebrated statue at New Orleans. While he was in command in the city, one day he was riding out with his Irish orderly, when they passed the dark bronze statue of Mr. Clay on Canal street, the Orderly rode up to the General's side and touched his hat and said, "General what statue is that?" The General replied, "It is Clay." A few days after that they were passing the same place again, and the Orderly again rode up to the General and said, "Why did you tell me that statue was Clay?" "Oh," replied the General, "Everybody says so." Said the Orderly, "General they have lied to you, for I examined it. It is iron."

But Mr. Clay had a monument more enduring than bronze in the hearts of his countrymen.

We are now far enough from the excitement of that period to view and measure it dispassionately. We can divide the last hundred years into two equal parts, and for almost exactly fifty years of that time the figure of Henry Clay towers up like a colossus in our history.

He suffered from unstinted abuse, and he also suffered even more from extravagant and ~~and~~ indiscriminating praise. He was the best loved and best hated man of his time. It has been well said that "A man is well provided, if, next to having a dozen

good friends, he has one good enemy."

Mr. Clay had plenty of both. The abuse that was heaped upon him and the admiration that he inspired, now seem incredible. His friends were indeed a choice array and his enemies a splendid host.

Napoleon at St. Helena told Las Casas that the reason history can only be written after the people, whose deeds are described are dead, was that all histories are lies, and that the historian who writes after his heroes are in the grave, may make his statements with impunity, for there is no one there to contradict them.

But as to the public man whose life and works are all connected with parliamentary affairs, the records are an open book to all, and may be weighed much more justly than the career of the military leader.

You have invited me tonight to discuss an interesting theme. My first childish recollections cluster around the name of Henry Clay. My father was an old time Whig, for Clay in 1844 as he was for Lincoln in 1860 and in 1864, and as he would have been, had he lived, for McKinley in 1896 and 1900, and for Roosevelt in 1904, and the first event in my memory is connected with the great campaign of 1844. My father gave me a new plush cap and bade me toss it up and give three cheers for Henry Clay, which I did with a will. A few hours later it accidentally burned out one side of the cap, for which my father gave me an application of a convenient lath. The circumstance was therefore emphasized on both body and mind, and made a lasting impression, and so the name of Clay sunk deep in my young mind.

I was in favor of Mr. Clay then because my father was. I remain a believer in the great tenets of that faith, because they have appealed to my mature judgment in later years.

Henry Clay was embarrassed by the dangers of his time. He loved the Union, and his life's dearest purpose was to preserve that Union at all hazards against all its foes.

He was a compromiser, because without compromise he believed that war would come, and with war would also come disunion. For himself he was a fighter, for his country, he was a compromiser.

To Clay, more than anyone else, was due the postponement of the civil war. Had that war come earlier, the result might have been different, and the destruction of the Union would have imperiled the cause of civilization itself. The men who write legislation into our laws are compromisers. There are always elements of difference, and they must be harmonized, unless the question at issue is one of such overwhelming importance that there can be no middle grounds of adjustment.

The men who refuse all middle grounds are the men who produce revolutions—or who produce nothing.

The ordinary affairs of the times are of necessity adjusted by mutual concessions.

Born in a humble home in Hanover County, Virginia, his boyish life as "the mul boy of the Slashes" was commemorated in many a fierce political campaign. He had the advantage of poverty, with its powerful stimulus to exertion, and he tasted its bitterness as well.

As the son of a Baptist preacher, he was another example to disprove the truth of the common adage about preacher's sons.

He was the fifth of seven children. There was no "racial suicide" in those days.

Like Lincoln, he "clerked in a store." Like Grover Cleveland, he served as a copyist in a law office. Both these copyists "set many copies for others."

Though these two men were very unlike—their handwriting is similar, as well as very good. Mr. Clay copied and studied law with George Wythe, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Wythe lived before his time and set a good example to Virginia by emancipating his slaves. His was a great law office, for Thomas Jefferson and John Marshall were both his students.

He had that wide variety of practice which developed the mind. But Richmond was crowded with talent,

and the young and ambitious Clay emigrated to the then far west, Kentucky.

The journey was a more serious one than the present day tour around the globe. Kentucky was further away than Borneo is now. He went boldly into this new field, fondly hoping that he might by industry and ability, make \$500 a year.

He was a rapid and omnivorous reader. His service as an amanuensis taught him to be exact.

His career as a public speaker made him one of the readiest men of his time. As Bacon expresses it, "Reading maketh a full man, writing maketh an exact man and speaking maketh a ready man."

His melodious voice was an inspiring instrument at the bar and on the hustings. Now we regret that we have no record of its melody upon the graphophone so that he might judge for ourselves.

"Let me hear that voice once more," said John Randolph when he was carried on his sick couch to the Senate chamber. His duel with Clay was forgotten.

We soon forget the joys, the sorrows, the victories and the defeats of the professional man. Great lawyers "work hard, live well and die poor," and the next generation forgets them. We remember Daniel Webster, but we forget his greater brother Ezekiel. One adhered to his professional career, and the other embarked in public life.

We wish to cast up the account of Henry Clay tonight.

He started out in life as a republican, the then name of the future democratic party, and as a member of that party he entered the Kentucky legislature in 1803.

Then at the early age of 29 he was appointed to fill the place in the United States Senate made vacant by the resignation of General Adair. He lacked three months of being of eligible age—but the point was not made against him, and the crime of being a young man, I am sorry to say, is soon outgrown.

Mr. Clay began talking to the Senate four days after taking his seat. Few recently elected senators have begun as soon as that.

As a member of the dominant party he readily defended Aaron Burr, who was the Jefferson Davis of his day. But Clay refused to even shake hands with Burr when time had uncovered the wicked purposes that had been concealed from him by that brilliant ex-vice president of the United States.

Thomas Jefferson was president, and his party claimed everything that was virtuous, past, present or future, just as it now holds banquets on Lincoln's birthday, skipping the anniversary of January 8th altogether.

It is still a funny old party. It fights everything, and then claims all the merit for its own defeat when the fight is over—even now it is beginning to conjure with the name of McKinley as well as that of Lincoln. We may beware of the man who says nothing good of republicans, except those who are dead.

But Clay came into public life when there was a lull in party acrimony. Mr. Jefferson had said, "We are all republicans, we are all federalists."

The Louisiana purchase had just opened up new visions to the eye of hope, and had kindled the imagination of the generation of that day. The new region was a long way off. Clay took up at once the project, by public improvements, of bringing the country nearer together, and promptly suggested a canal around the falls of the Ohio.

Jefferson could see no authority under the Constitution, but he yielded to the popular demand. So he asked that the constitution be amended and that the highways be made. But Clay and Jackson after riding on horseback through the wilderness to Washington realized the necessity of some speedier method of making the journey.

The Roman Empire was knit together by its highways. The great American Republic had the same needs.

Clay wanted a national road to the Ohio. The constitutional power of congress to build it, was then doubted. Now we have built railways to the Pacific and are putting up telegraph lines in Alaska.

Mr. Clay was not 30 years of age until April 12, 1807, but on March 4, 1807, his first appointment to the United States Senate expired, and so

he commenced his congressional life without any too strict regard to the letter of the Constitution.

He returned to Kentucky and was elected to the Legislature and became speaker of the Assembly. He was a believer in the merits of the English Common Law, which great heritage came to us through our ancestry. In that legislature the feeling against Great Britain was extreme, and some twister of the lion's tail of that day whose name is now unknown to fame, moved to forbid the citation in the courts of any English law book or decision of the courts of the mother country.

This absurd motion was seriously debated in the English language by men of English blood and lineage and was about to pass, when Mr. Clay descended from the Speaker's chair and delivered a eulogy on the common law which turned the tide of prejudice, and the motion was defeated.

In this assembly, Mr. Clay sounded the key note of protection, by a resolution that the members of the legislature should wear only American clothing, and he wore with pardonable ostentation garments of purely domestic manufacture. He was proud of his Kentucky jeans.

This question led to a personal assault by Humphrey Marshall, and a duel in which they were both wounded.

When I was admitted to the bar in Kentucky a few years ago, in order to try a law case there, I had to take an oath that I had "never sent or accepted a challenge to fight a duel in the state of Kentucky." I suggested to the court that I was willing to swear that I never would do so either. The Judge said this provision in the Kentucky constitution was once rendered necessary by conditions that no longer exist. But in Mr. Clay's time the successful practitioner was compelled to be always ready to attend an early morning meeting with pistols and coffee.

And so it happened that Clay shed his first blood for protection, a cause which he always fondly denominated the "American system."

He regarded a clothing schedule as sufficiently sacred in those days to be willing to die for it.

Again Mr. Clay went to the Senate to end the unexpired term of Mr. Thurston. He seems to have commenced his senatorial service on the installment plan.

In 1810 he actively took up the kindred political subjects of internal improvements and protection to American industries, and his speeches read today as familiarly as if they had been taken bodily from those of McKinley, Blaine, or Tom Reed. In fact, there has been but little improvement in the arguments of the protectionists since that day.

He assured the people that the protective tariff would in the end increase production, reduce the price and improve the character of the article produced.

He was even willing that the government should promote the manufacture of needed articles of national defense by a direct subsidy or loan.

His speeches on this subject were in the nature of prophecies. His predictions are now history, but the opponents of his policies are still repeating the exploded arguments of sixty years ago. His speeches in 1832 are now, after 71 years, good living arguments in the present day.

Mr. Clay never became President. He achieved higher distinction, for on this question he was right. Let us look at a few of his arguments made in 1832 in the Senate.

He claimed that:

"Protective duties, if not prohibitory, are not a tax on the consumers, for the importer will pay the tax in order to reach our market."

The revenue tariff, prior to 1824, was the "Wilson Law" of that day. The tariff of 1824 corresponded to the "Dingley Act" of the present time.

Mr. Clay said:

"If I were to select any term of seven years which exhibited a scene of the most wide-spread dismay and desolation, it would be exactly that term of seven years immediately preceding the tariff act of 1824."

Then he said by contrast:

"If the term of seven years were to be selected of the greatest prosperity which this people have enjoyed since the establishment of their present Constitution, it would be exactly that period of seven years which immedi-

ately followed the passage of the tariff of 1824. Gloom and distress were changed to brightness and prosperity, by fostering American industry, instead of allowing it to be controlled by foreign legislation cherishing foreign industry."

Opponents of the protective tariff said it would prevent imports, cut off the revenue and destroy commerce, and also curtail exports. But all these things proved as false in 1824 as they did in 1897.

Revenue increased, commerce revived, exports expanded, and the commercial cities instead of going into decay, flourished beyond the dreams of the optimists.

Mr. Clay in his long public life, was progressive. He was able to change his views upon some vital questions, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse.

He earnestly opposed the recharter of the United States Bank, and his vote defeated it by one majority. But not many years later he was as earnestly on the side of chartering a new bank.

After two short terms in the Senate, at the age of 34, he was elected to that greatest of legislative bodies, the House of Representatives. Out of "the solemn stillness of the Senate he entered the turbulent House," and he welcomed the change. It was like resigning from the bench to enlist in the cavalry, and he liked it. There was his appropriate forum. He was in his element.

The House was wild and noisy and it is still as tempestuous as ever. When I was returning home from my first session in the House, my little daughter was with me, and in Chicago we went in curiosity to the gallery of the Board of Trade at midday, when the trading of the day was at its height. I said to the little girl, "What do you think of it?" She said "It's just like the House of Representatives."

Clay was promptly elected Speaker, but he freely took his place on the floor in the Committee of the Whole as its chief debater.

The great struggle between Napoleon and Great Britain was raging. Mr. Jefferson called an extra session to forbid all foreign commerce, as a pro-

test against the wrongs of the European contestants.

It was proposed to save our commerce by killing it.

Mr. Jefferson proposed to build gunboats which could only be used in the creeks and bays and to take our shipping off the seas. This was a good precedent for those of our own day who want to kill the trusts by paralyzing all business by free trade.

Clay and Calhoun stood together in those days, and Clay sounded a bugle note for an American Navy. When war was declared in 1812, he led the aggressive forces in the House.

We had only 8,000,000 population, but they were brave and defiant.

But when the war came on our people were not fully united. Josiah Quincy led the "anti-war party" and set the example for the "antis" of the present day.

But it was Jackson, not Clay, who reaped its fruits. Clay showed up the peace policy of that day. The "antis" were for war until war came, and then they were for peace.

He said:

"You find them tacking with every gale, displaying the colors of every party and of all nations, steady only in one unalterable purpose—to steer, if possible, into the haven of power."

The President offered to Clay the position of Commander in Chief of the Army, but he lost the opportunity of military glory, and later in life found himself battling against the renown of the hero of New Orleans.

In 1813 he was again Speaker, and the war was in progress.

In 1814 he resigned his gavel and went abroad on a diplomatic mission. Our capitol had been burned by the enemy, and the prospects of peace were by no means encouraging.

The peace treaty was not gratifying, but the victory of New Orleans, after the treaty had been signed, but before it was known on this side of the ocean, gave us all the honors of victory.

It was the war and not the treaty which ended it, that brought us permanent respect in the Old World.

Clay was back again in Congress and Speaker once more in 1815. In 1816 a protective tariff was passed by the democratic-republicans of that day. And so the party in power found them-

selves favoring a national bank and a protective policy. Clay veered around to the side of the bank. He had learned something from our disordered currency. The democracy of that day were led by Clay and Calhoun.

But Clay voted to increase the salary of congressmen to \$1,500 a year, and nearly lost his election because of this extravagance. But we must remember that \$1,500 was a lot of money in those days. Then came the "era of good feeling." Clay was tendered a place in Madison's cabinet, but declined. He was looking higher. In 1817 he was again Speaker. He wisely declined the lower place in the cabinet. The Speakership had already become the second place in the nation.

Now Mr. Clay's love of the "Ark of our Liberty the Union" became foremost. Public improvements were steadily welding it together. Then came the South American revolt, and he took up the cause of the Colonists with great fervor. His speeches were translated and read at the head of the patriot armies in South America, inspiring them with enthusiasm.

Now it was that Clay and Jackson first clashed.

When Jackson hung Arbuthnot and Ambrister, Clay declared open war against him and this was the turning point in Clay's life.

But it is dangerous to attack a military hero or his army. If a foreign foe attack our army, they will defend themselves.

It is dangerous for an American to attack them, for the people will always stand by their soldiers.

Why will not all men understand this?

But the slavery question continued to obtrude itself, and it became the work of Mr. Clay's life to keep down the spectre of the Civil war. The cotton gin was invented in New England and made slavery rich. That institution at once wanted to stretch its limbs to the west, and now began the struggle for more slave states.

The dissolution of the Union was imminent, and compromise only averted war. The Missouri Compromise was the work of Clay in 1820.

As Speaker he delayed a reconsideration until the bill could be sent to the Senate, and then ruled that it

was beyond the House's control.

No such proceeding as this would be thought of now by the most czar-like speaker. But Mr. Clay regarded this compromise as essential to peace and union and was willing to use strong and even arbitrary methods to enact it into law.

The Southern statesmen of that time were getting ready for Secession.

Compromise alone averted the attempt and the hands of freedom were probably not then strong enough to have saved the Union by wager of battle.

Mr. Clay, like many public men, was in straightened circumstances. Like Tom Reed, he resigned his Speakership to work for himself and his family.

But in 1823 he again returned to Congress and again was he chosen Speaker.

His compromise had made him "The Great Pacificator..." Peace-makers are useful but have no such hold on the popular heart as warriors. Mr. Clay resumed his contest for a National Road.

The revolt in Greece against the unspeakable Turk found Mr. Clay supporting the Insurgents, and the Holy Alliance against Republican government was met by the announcement of the Monroe Doctrine.

In 1824 Mr. Clay warmly espoused the cause of protection. He christened it the "American System" and so it has remained for eighty years.

He spoke for protection, and Webster against it. But four years later Webster saw the light and joined hands with Clay. Slavery had shifted to free trade. Free labor demanded protection, and so Clay and Calhoun came to the parting of the ways. The Federalists had disappeared and there was only one party.

If there be but one party it will naturally divide. Nothing but the prejudice of a race question, prevents this now in the South.

All nature teaches the necessity of duality. Republics must have two parties to manage affairs, a governmental party and an opposition.

And so events begun to reshape and realign parties.

The compromise for the time being removed the tension of the slavery issue, and so internal improvements and protection became the prominent features of Mr. Clay's faith.

In those days the "Caucus" ruled. A caucus of the Congress made nominations for the presidency, and the convention had not yet been invented.

In 1824 there was a cheerful and delicate political contest. Jackson was denounced as a murderer, Crawford as a corruptionist and Clay as a gambler. Jackson had 99 electoral votes, John Quincy Adams 84, Crawford 41, and Clay 37. Clay not being one of the three highest, was barred out of the election in the House by the provisions of the Constitution.

But he was a member of the House, and took part in the election, and the most irritating thing in his political life was the charge that he voted for Adams in consideration of a seat in his cabinet as Secretary of State.

Pending the election in the House he found himself exceedingly popular. Jackson dined with him—but he voted for Adams, and so Jackson had to wait for four years for the presidency.

One of the pleasantest features of Clay's life occurred when he was accorded the privilege of welcoming LaFayette to America. His speech was one of the gems of the World's oratory. He "welcomed General LaFayette to posterity."

The real weakness of Mr. Clay's life was the presidential fever.

It is as dangerous to peace of mind in 1903 as it was in 1824, and it gives the most pain to those who have the least cause for catching it.

When Clay accepted the position of Secretary of State he was presumably in line for the presidency. But Jackson accepted a nomination tendered him by the Tennessee Legislature, three years in advance, and at once sent in his resignation as Senator.

Clay had a bold and dangerous opponent. As Secretary of State Mr. Clay was the right man in the right place.

He had been educated in the school of practical public life. He knew conditions and he knew men. His

training was very like that of William McKinley.

But calumny, like death, loves a shining mark. Randolph described the Secretary of State as a blackleg and a challenge at once ensued. The Code at least imposed some limits on the abuse of speech and press. We talk lightly of the good old times when there was no abuse, and of the furious license of the press in these days.

But Clay was the target of mud slinging such as would shock the editors of the yellow journals of the Twentieth Century. The charge that he had voted for Adams through a corrupt bargain was persistently reiterated, and harassed him nearly all his days.

The playing of cards for money by public men, sixty years ago, was not condemned so severely as it is today. It is told of Mrs. Clay, that when one of her lady friends asked her if the fact that her husband played poker did not give her much trouble, the good lady replied, "Not at all, for Mr. Clay generally wins."

The revolutionary presidents ended with Monroe.

The Civil War presidents have probably ended with McKinley.

Clay had great ideas of an American federation—a dream revived by Mr. Blaine, the tragedy of whose life in many respects resembles that of Mr. Clay.

The Panama Congress of Clay was expected to be something akin to the Amphictyonic Council of the Greek Republics, and its total failure was a source of great distress to him.

Mr. Clay was a slaveholder of the Washington type, and though he hoped for the final extinction of that institution, he was influenced by the spirit of his environment when he proposed to Great Britain to surrender deserters from the British Army and Navy in exchange for refugee slaves in Canada.

His support of Colonization stands as an offset to the reproach of this proffer to Great Britain.

In 1828 Jackson defeated Adams and Clay was not a candidate. But in 1832 the new cleavage of parties

progressed.

The Democratic-Republicans were led by Jackson and the National Republicans supported Clay. Later on in 1834, they became Democrats and Whigs. Andrew Jackson was a good hater and his favorite aversion was Henry Clay.

In 1832 conventions made their appearance and the old Congressional Caucus system disappeared forever.

Political chickens nearly always come home to roost. Jackson's veto of the Bank Charter, in 1832, contained the arguments made by Clay in 1811. This is one of the disadvantages of longevity in public life. Consistency is a jewel that must occasionally be recut and reset.

Defeated again in 1832, in 1833 came the tariff compromises and the nullification by South Carolina. Again was a Southern Confederacy threatened, and Clay prevented the attempt by another compromise.

Jackson, in his message, spoke in favor of a reduction of the tariff to a revenue basis, but he threw his whole power and weight on the side of the Union. Calhoun resigned as Vice President and went to the Senate to fight for nullification.

The issue was the power of each state to nullify the federal laws. It was a very lively question then. It is a very dead one now.

But it cost more than a million of lives and eight billions of money to bury it. War was imminent and again Mr. Clay came in as a pacificator. Again we have the compromise of 1833. Nullification would have been persisted in but for Jackson's vigorous proclamation. Finally Calhoun himself voted with Clay. But while Clay was pressing his compromise, he at the same time pushed the Force Bill of Jackson.

The land of power held out the olive branch of peace; from such a hand it is the most welcome. Jackson's spoils system led Clay to favor a tenure of office act, but it took the Andrew Johnson era to enact it into law.

In 1836 the Missouri Compromise no longer kept the peace. It had been a stay of proceedings, not a settle-

ment. With Garrison mobbed in Massachusetts and Lovejoy murdered in Illinois, we might imagine the state of feeling on the Slavery Question further South. Slavery was sowing the wind. It denied the right of petition; denied the right of free speech; denied the freedom of debate; and finally it attempted to close the mails against its foes.

In 1836 Van Buren was elected and Clay was not a candidate.

In 1834 Jackson was censured by the Senate for the removal of the treasury deposits from the Bank. This censure created more excitement than the Spanish War did in 1898.

Thomas H. Benton declared the expunging of these resolutions to be his life work, and the expunging resolution answered the double purpose of showing deep devotion to Jackson and hostility to Clay.

The black lines around and across the record of this resolution did not change the fact of censure, but showed that a subsequent senate was willing to prove its partisanship as being even greater than that of the body which passed the original resolutions.

This endorsement across the yellow, faded record of 1834 is a mute memorial of one of the bitterest battles in parliamentary history.

The surplus in the Treasury gave great trouble to the democracy of that day, and the sum of \$37,168,857 was ordered deposited with the various states, as a method of getting it out of the way.

It was effective, as far as it was done, for the deposit has proved a permanent one.

When the assault on the Bank and national currency, coupled with the reduction of the tariff to a strictly revenue basis, bore its natural, usual and logical fruit in the panic of 1837, Clay insisted on carrying out the agreement with the states, and proposed, with a grim humor, to borrow enough money to distribute the fourth installment of the "surplus."

Artemus Ward, at a later period, announced his determination to "live within his income if he had to borrow the money to do it." But the last

installment of the vanished surplus was never paid.

When Clay was about to make his speech, practically surrendering his previous anti-slavery views, he said to Senator Preston, of South Carolina, "I had rather be right than be President," but in fact he was surrendering to the wrong in hopes of being President.

In 1840 his opportunity seemed ripe to be both right and President.

But Wm. Henry Harrison carried the day, and offered Clay the position of Secretary of State which he declined.

Clay's speeches were usually serious, but he had his humorous side. In 1840, at Nashville, he asked his audience, "Where is my old Democratic friend, Felix Grundy?" Some one replied, "he is over in East Tennessee, speaking for Van Buren's administration." "Ah" at his old occupation, defending criminals," said Clay.

In the greater part of his service Mr. Clay persisted in his plan to distribute the proceeds of the sales of the public land to the various states.

When his pet measure was finally enacted, it was coupled with a condition that the tariff rates should be first reduced to 20 per cent or less, and so when he succeeded in 1841 in passing his bill, it proved inoperative. In those days the measures relating to the public domain were of the most vital importance. The great debate between Webster and Hayne was over a public land bill.

Clay's long struggle against Jackson's power and Van Buren's cunning had ended, and in 1840 the Whigs had won the coveted control of the administration. But by some fatality an only half baked Whig, who was in fact a democrat, took the reins when Harrison's brief month of power had ended.

Vice Presidents have been often disappointing, and the nomination of a man of doubtful politics, or of uncertain antecedents for the second place on the ticket has at least three times in our history, led to bitter disappointment.

Tyler gave us a new verb, "to

Tylerize;" Fillmore was only a little less disappointing than Tyler; but Andrew Johnson did still worse, he "Johnsonized," and gave us such a warning that the Grand Old Party will never again select a man of unsound or doubtful political views as the running mate for the presidential nominee.

The determination to place a first-class, reliable Republican in the vice presidency in 1900 has served both the nation and the party in good stead in the great calamity of the death of our beloved William McKinley.

When Tyler went over to the enemy Clay assumed the undisputed leadership of his party once more, and in 1844 his nomination was as logical as that of McKinley in 1896.

The one hour rule of debate in the House was the work of Mr. Clay. He favored an international copyright law, but in this he was many years before his time, but that measure has now become a law.

On March 31, 1842, Mr. Clay made his farewell address to the Senate and presented the credentials of John J. Crittenden.

In 1844 he was 67 years old, but he was both the idol and the nominee of his party. The annexation of Texas and the proposed extension of slavery forced that issue forward in spite of all of the compromises that had been made. It had outgrown the covering with which it had been concealed. The Quaker Mendenhall at Richmond, Ind., embarrassed Mr. Clay fearfully by presenting to him a petition asking him to emancipate his slaves. Clay's answer was adroit, but an issue was forced that was very detrimental to his chances of success.

He wrote his Raleigh letter against the annexation of Texas and offended the slaveholders. He then wrote his Alabama letter on the other side, and thus displeased the anti-slavery men and lost New York. He was his own Burchard. New York defeated him by only 5080 votes, and Birney, the anti-slavery candidate, received 15812, enough to give the state and the presidency to Polk, whose candidacy was in the cause of slavery extension.

By straddling on Texas Mr. Clay lost in the North without gaining in the South. There are many points of resemblance in the misfortunes of Clay and Blaine.

"Polk, Dallas, Texas and the Tariff of 1842," was the rallying cry in 1844.

The Democrats stole Clay's tariff thunder and put their opponents in the false light of enemies to protection.

By the Texas controversy the anti-slavery germs were developed in the Whig Party. And so, the Clay Whigs of 1844 formed a new party, and some years later become the Lincoln Republicans of 1860.

When defeated in 1844 Mr. Clay found himself burdened with debt and was about to surrender his property to his creditors when he discovered that his debts had all been paid. His creditors refused to give the names of the donors, but they told the late debtor that the persons "were presumably his friends."

Fifty years later William McKinley had a like example of gratitude from the people when his surety debts were all extinguished by unknown friends and admirers.

After the election Sheppard, of North Carolina said that "Clay could get more men to hear him speak and fewer to vote for him, than any man in America."

The Democracy of 1844 were loud in demands for the enforcement of our claim as to the Oregon boundary.

"Fifty-four forty or fight," was one of their rallying cries in 1844, but this Democracy had passed wholly under the control of the slaveholders, and, to make sure of having a freehand with Mexico, without British interference, the contention as to the Northwestern boundary was yielded, and the present line was agreed upon.

Clay was opposed to the Mexican War, but when the war came Henry Clay, Jr., led a Kentucky Regiment and fell gloriously at Buena Vista.

In 1846 an event occurred which excited but little attention at the time, but was big with fate to humanity.

Abraham Lincoln was elected to

Congress as a "Henry Clay Whig," and he too stood by Clay in his Mexican War views.

Scott had possession of the Mexican capital and the Democracy wanted to hold the whole of the territory of our neighboring republic. They were great expansionists.

Clay came out of his retirement to protest against this spoliation, and his protest was heeded.

The war with Mexico produced the usual crop of heroes, and Mr. Clay was side tracked in 1848 for "Old Rough and Ready" Zachary Taylor. The Whigs had grown tired of following Clay to defeat, as the Democracy of today have grown tired of following the standard of their leader from Nebraska.

The Democrats nominated Cass and Butler, and the Whigs, Taylor and Fillmore. Clay was left disappointed in the back ground at the age of 71.

The hero of Buena Vista had about as shadowy a view of politics as did the hero of Manila. Taylor proposed that "Congress should run the politics of the country and that he would be the President of the whole people."

This was as freshly ingenuous as the statement of the grand old Admiral that he too would let Congress govern the country, if he should be elected to the Presidency. Clay, like Achilles, sulked in his Kentucky tent, but Taylor was elected.

The life of Henry Clay involves the history of the United States from before the War of 1812 to the period just preceding the Civil War.

In 1848 Anti-slavery extension showed itself as a growing factor.

In 1850 Mr. Clay again returned to the Senate, where he was honored by an attack from Jefferson Davis, the son-in-law of Taylor.

Again he essayed the role of a compromiser. The fear of disunion made Webster truckle to slavery. Clay as a slaveholder could hardly do less.

But he answered South Carolina with the statement that he would never fight against the Union, even under the banner of his state. Said he:—"Virginia is not my country, Kentucky is not my country. I am for the whole Union."

The Fugitive Slave Law was a part of the Compromise of 1850, and its dubious honors were shared by both Clay and Webster. But the compromise was only a truce—it could be nothing more. No such wrong as human slavery could be compromised without compromising the compromisers.

But this fatal law started the man hunter through the free states and aroused the conscience of the nation. When the slave Shadrach was released from the officers in Boston by a crowd of negroes, Clay in the Senate announced himself as "highly shocked."

He fondly imagined that the Compromise had settled things—but some things cannot be settled. But his last speech in the Senate was for compromise and Union.

In his pilgrimage through the North in 1851 he denounced the violation of the fugitive slave law as treason.

In 1853 both party platforms declared in favor of the fugitive slave law. There was indeed need for a new party.

Clay's last public talk was to Kossuth and dissuading from the attempt to involve America in the Hungarian imbroglio. It failed to please Kossuth, but it was the word of wisdom to the United States.

In the Whig caucus April 9, 1851, a number of members seceded from the meeting, because slavery they claimed, needed more protection.

April 9, 1865, fourteen years later, to a day, Lee surrendered.

When Clay died in 1852, both parties had adopted his compromise, but the people were already getting ready to overthrow it, and in 1854 the Republican Party of today was founded on the ruins of the old Whig organization. The days of compromise were over. Men began to gird themselves for battle. Charles Sumner had taken the place of Webster, and Benjamin F. Wade represented the sentiment of Ohio in the Senate.

Mr. Clay, in his speech on the Army Bill, January 8, 1813, gave the key note to his life's work. He said:

"If we are united we are too powerful for the mightiest nation in Europe,

or all Europe combined. If we are separated and torn asunder we shall become an easy prey to the weakest of them. In the latter dreadful emergency, our country will not be worth preserving."

All men are influenced by their environment. Had Clay gone to Illinois, instead of Kentucky, no doubt he would have stood with Lincoln on the question of restricting slavery.

It took the war to carry Lincoln to the point of forcible abolition. Clay fought against British misrule, Greek oppression, and Jackson's haughty imperialism.

And he fought for the American system, public improvements, national banks and was willing to make any compromise for the Union—all for the Union.

He died at the National Hotel in Washington June 29, 1852, and his funeral procession proceeded through a sorrowing nation by way of Baltimore, New York City, Philadelphia, Rochester, Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Louisville to his last resting place at Lexington.

In 1865 a similar funeral procession carried Lincoln to Illinois and later on McKinley's sad cortege passed through tearful multitudes to Canton.

The fifty years of public life of Henry Clay were always full of the highest national patriotism.

He laid the foundation, he paved the way, he led up to the conditions out of which came the struggle for freedom and the Union in 1861.

He delayed that contest until the hour of fate had come, and until the hand of freedom was strong enough to deal with all the foes of the Union. A united, prosperous and happy country owes grateful remembrance to the immortal name of Henry Clay.

Clay's last appeal was for the restoration of the protective tariff of 1846.

He might compromise to prevent war, but his faith in his favorite system was unshaken. History is ever repeating the same lessons.

In friendly intercourse around the board of this Grant Republican Club, we may well consider the future of our party and our country. In the

language of the illustrious old hero, "Let us have peace." Free interchange of thought, and outspoken expression of views are for the good of all. I have never hesitated to express my opinions upon the great principles and policies of our party. The success of the party of protection, sound money and good government, is important to the interests of the whole country. Its success should not be imperiled on any mere matters of detail.

Republican doctrines have sprung spontaneously from the concurrent views of its representatives in convention assembled, and they have spoken in no uncertain tones upon all the great questions as they have arisen.

In my public life I have seen four revisions, or attempted revisions of the tariff. The Mills, McKinley, Wilson and Dingley Bills have all in turn occupied the attention of the country, and everybody knows the depression that attends a tariff agitation and general revision. It is not necessary now to discuss why this is true, for in the last thirteen years the nation has three times undergone the practical experience which brings with it knowledge.

In 1896, after having gone through so much tariff agitation, the party at St. Louis demanded the repeal of the Wilson Law, and then used this instructive language, "We are not pledged to any particular schedule. The question of rates is a practical question, to be governed by the conditions of the time and of production; the ruling and uncompromising principle is the protection and development of American labor and industry. The Country demands a right settlement and then it wants rest."

It has had a settlement and since then has had work for the laborer and rest from tariff agitation.

There are some who are willing to try the experiment of depriving the country of this rest even at the risk of giving abundant leisure once more to our workingmen.

The result is the same whether protection is removed by friends or enemies.

The life of Henry Clay furnishes us a lesson on this subject. He was a protectionist of the pronounced and original type. But he was ever ready to sacrifice the tenets of his party faith to save the Union, and so he made the tariff compromise of 1833.

The South Carolina policy of that day demanded free trade, and her Governor and Legislators were determined that if Congress would not give them tariff reform they would have it themselves. So, Mr. Clay agreed that the tariff should be reformed by an annual reduction for a term of years. He submitted to it but he did not pretend to like it. He agreed to reduce the schedules year by year, until South Carolina should be satisfied, and in 1837 one of the worst industrial panics in the history of our country came and came very naturally. The tariff had been slowly mutilated by its friends, and industry lay dead.

In 1893 the "tariff reformers" struck it down at one blow. The methods were different. The consequences were the same.

No doubt there are schedules in the Dingley Act that are imperfect. So there have been in all tariff laws. So there will be in the next one.

In time every tariff must be revised and changed. But while the reductions are being made, whether by Henry Clay or William L. Wilson, the country will stand by and "mark time" until the thing is over. Perhaps it ought not to do so,—but it always does.

No American industry is now languishing. No American laborer is unemployed. No American is working at reduced wages. It is suggested that Europe is highly prosperous also, and that therefore our own present industrial activity is by no means exceptional. But they do not talk that way in Europe. They complain bitterly there that America is not only holding her home market but is also reaching out and taking an undue share of the trade of the world. A man who is at the head of the industrial procession and is in favor of keeping his position need not be worried by hearing some one say that he is "unprogressive."

A tree should be judged by its fruit and a tariff law by its results.

Measured by this fairest of all tests, the worst tariff act ever placed upon our statute books was the Wilson Law, and judged by the same just standard, no law has ever brought us as good results as the Dingley Act. Let us enjoy and do justice to its sunshine, and not spend too much of our time with smoked glass looking for spots on the sun.

In 1892, at high tide of prosperity, with the McKinley Law only two years old, the American people resolved to go through the throes of a general tariff revision. They wanted "the markets of the world," and especially free trade with Canada. They wanted to meet the changed and prosperous conditions of the times, by adapting the tariff schedules to the needs of the hour. Enough Republicans voted for "tariff reform" to put the experiment in operation, and it is only five years since we began to recover from the most calamitous period in our history. 1837 was repeated with greater emphasis in 1893.

The Republicans who went astray in 1892, as well as those who "stood pat," all bore the ills of 1893 to 1897 in common, and the Democrats suffered with the rest. It is sometimes safe to find out what our opponents want us to do and then—not do it.

Reciprocity has for many years been a cardinal principle of Republican faith. I believe Republicans universally favor reciprocity, as heretofore announced in our platform, but by this they do not mean giving much for little, or something for nothing. They are in favor of reciprocity, but it must be a reciprocity which reciprocates. An absolute and unqualified agreement to give the open trade of 80,000,000 people in the United States, in exchange for like trade of only 5,000,000 in Canada, involves a careful examination of all the details, and those gentlemen who may be ready out of hand to declare at once in favor of such a treaty, will find that the cost must and will be first counted. The suggestion will meet with most favor from manufacturers who want to retain the western market for them-

selves, while buying the articles which they consume in the Canadian market; or of real estate speculators, who have invested in Canadian lands.

The Iowa farmer will want to know something of the details of such a treaty before getting unduly excited in its favor.

We must not make the mistake of assuming that any sort of free trade with any sort of a country, under the name of reciprocity, is of necessity a good thing. The Blaine and McKinley doctrine of reciprocity involved the idea of contracts in which the United States should have a fair exchange or benefits.

We tried an experiment with Hawaii, and for fourteen years the rebates on Hawaiian sugar during those years, 1877 to 1890, amounted to \$88,546,853.56, during which time the entire purchases from us by these islands amounted to only \$97,816,633. We paid in rebates for her entire purchases from us except \$9,379,779.44.

Of course such reciprocity was popular in the Sandwich Islands. Any country would be willing to buy goods of us if we would give them rebates enough out of the Treasury to pay for ninety per cent of their total purchases. Of course Hawaiian reciprocity was an extreme case, but it serves as an excellent illustration of the difficulties to be met in making treaties of this character. And Canadian reciprocity was tried from 1855 to 1866.

Our experience of reciprocity with Canada covered about eleven years from 1855 to 1866, and as this period included the time of the Civil War with all its derangement of business, it gave us no fair test, but at the end of the period the results were such as to make the treaty unpopular, if not undesirable, to the United States.

The duties which we remitted to Canada the last year and nine months of this treaty in 1865 and 1866 amounted to \$70,152,163, and during the same period the balance of trade was against us in our dealings with Canada in the sum of \$28,134,749.

The disadvantages of that treaty to the United States may be readily appreciated by reading the list of the products of the United States which

Canada admitted free of duty under the treaty. She admitted our "bread-stuffs, meats, fish, raw cotton, vegetables, fruits, poultry, eggs, hides, furs, skins, stone, dairy products, ores, fertilizers, lumber, wood, flax, hemp, tow and unmanufactured tobacco."

But on the other hand, we admitted all these same things free into the United States from Canada. So with the exception of raw cotton and unmanufactured tobacco, which Canada needed in her manufactures and could not produce, she got a free market for her competing products in the United States, in exchange for free trade in her market in the things with which we could least successfully compete. And a large portion of the agreement was directly hostile to the products of Iowa. Let us have reciprocity, but when we get another reciprocal treaty with Canada, let us hope that we will get a little fairer deal than the treaty of 1855.

Reciprocity is more difficult in its negotiation and operation than it is in theory. It must first run the gauntlet of diplomacy, after which it encounters in the senate the endless chain of debate and refusal of unanimous consent, and the further necessity of receiving enough votes from the opposition to make a two-thirds majority.

Many carefully guarded reciprocal treaties were negotiated under the McKinley law, but they were swept away at the next revision of the tariff.

Reciprocity, desirable as it is, as a practical business proposition meets with many obstacles at home as well as abroad.

Reciprocity in competitive articles, as a principle of Republican faith, is the latest suggestion. I wish to express my utter dissent from this doctrine.

It is argued that whenever we may benefit one industry more than we injure another, by such treaty, we should make the sacrifice of one of Protection's children for the benefit of the other. No one can weigh in advance the profit and loss of experiments of this kind, and no Republican platform has ever recommended such a policy.

Let us take counsel together and in

good nature and fraternal spirit unite upon the policies and principles which have in the past brought success to our party and prosperity to the country, and I believe that no better declaration of our party principles can be drawn than that so clearly stated by President Theodore Roosevelt. What is best for the United States is best for the Republican party.

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